



Gibran Kahlil (Gibrān Khalīl Gibrān)

Biography and Achievements

(1883-1931)

Prelude

It goes without saying that Gibran Khalīl is one of the most prominent and famous Lebanese figures, known nationally and internationally. His good reputation was gained in two sectors: literature and art. His work, biography and personality draw interest and they were, until this day, piquing the curiosity of many researchers and scholars from all over the world.

Many researches and studies were conducted on Gibran’s personality and work. In the valuable and elaborative analytical-synthetic study written by “Ghāzī Fū’ād Brax” on Gibran’s style in literature, personality and work, Brax classified all what was written about him in three categories¹: the first one is when “the facts were mixed with illusions” and were written in a narrative style that was sometimes supportive (as in “Barbara Yang Book”²) and in other times was dominated by self-display (as Mīkhā’īl Nu’aymah’s book was critiqued³). In the second category, the authors avoided the previous mistakes; however, they sometimes succeeded and in other times failed (as in Jabr⁴ and other books). In the third category, they followed the scientific method, which has helped them to correct their previous mistakes and avoid roving (as with Khalīl Hāwī⁵ and Anṭūn Ghaṭṭās Karam⁶).

¹ Brax, Ghāzī, *Gibran Kahlil: An analytical-synthetic study on Gibran’s personality, art and achievements*, Printing And Publishing House of An-Nisr Al-Mūḥallīq, Beirut, Lebanon, 1973, pp. 17-19.

² Young, Barbara, *This Man From Lebanon: A Study Of Kahlil Gibran*, New York, A.A. Knopf, 1945.

³ Nu’aymah, Mīkhā’īl, *Gibran Kahlil: His Life, Death, Literature, And Art*, Nawfal Institution, Beirut, Lebanon, seventh copy, 1974.

⁴ Jabr, Jamīl, *Gibran: His Biography, Literature, Philosophy, And Art*, Ar-Rihani Publishing And Printing House, Beirut, 1958.

⁵ Hāwī, Khalīl, *Khalil Gibran: His background, character and work*, Beirut, A.U.B., 1963.

⁶ Karam, Ghaṭṭās Anṭūn, *Lectures On Gibran Kahlil, His Biography, Culture, And Arabic Books*, Academy Of The World Arabic Studies, 1964.

Brax, in his classification, seemed willing to put his study on Gibran in a forth category, which adopts the analytical-synthetic approach, and is based on his achievements in literature, specifically in the psychology of art. Hence, he tried to bridge the gap, fix the disagreements, and avoid the contradiction in the assessments and prospects defecting the previous researches on Gibran’s personality and work in art and writing.

In this context, we can cite two more approaches adopted in the studies made later on Gibran, that are still under development. The first one was carried out by Kamāl Yūsuf Al-Ḥāj in his encyclopedia called “the (...) summary of the Lebanese philosophy”¹ launched at the beginning of 1974. Ḥāj wanted in his study on Gibran to usher in a new era, adopting a philosophical approach based on the necessity to develop a philosophical system or structure comprising all the aspects of Gibran’s writings. However, Ḥāj study was the only one made and didn’t draw the attention of other researchers in their studies on other famous figures (such as Rihani, Nu‘aymah, Al-Chmayyīl, among others). Knowing that more than four decades elapsed since it was conducted, and Ḥāj adopted it, to study other famous figures. The second one consists of the ontological philosophical criticism in the critical studies of literature, which was made and adopted by the ontological French Philosopher Jean Paul Sartre in his analytical study on the life of the French poet Beaudelaire. It was also adopted by Nabīl Ayyūb inn his brief study on Gibran, in his book called “Naṣ al-Qāri’ al-Mūkhtalif wa sīmyā’ iyyat al-Khiṭāb al-Naqdī” - part two – issued in 2011².

An important paradox should be mentioned here. It is the one related to the contrast, and ambiguity surrounding the work and personality of Gibran, despite the great number of studies and researches that have been and continue to be conducted on this particular figure. It may be the result of the absence of the comprehensive methodical endorsement of the facts surrounding Gibran’s biography, and the objective conditions surrounding his achievements, encompassing writing and painting. For this reason - according to the highest academic and scientific measures - writing a complete methodical archive is a must, to have an adopted reference, before starting

¹ Al-Ḥāj, Kamāl Yūsuf, *The Complete Books*, the eleventh tome, *In The Lebanese Philosophy* -2, (Lebanese philosophical summary), Intellectual House – founded by Kamāl Yūsuf Al-Ḥāj, First Edition, 2014, pp. 444 – 460.

² Ayyūb, Nabīl, *Naṣ Al-Qāri’ Al-Mūkhtalif wa sīmyā’ iyyat Al-Khiṭāb An-Naqdī*, Part Two, Lebanese Library, First Edition, 2011, pp. 266 – 283.

any research or study on Gibran, all the aspects related to his busy life, his varied rich work, or his facetious creative personality. These ways of studying not only can be used for Gibran, but also for his predecessors and those who came after him. We can also mention that the Lebanese intellectual institution at Notre Dame University- Louaize became aware of that. Hence, for many years, it started working on it, still expending its work, and determined to continue until it reaches the happy endings.

Gibran descent, birth and childhood

He is the son of Khalīl Bin Gibran Bin Sa‘d Bin Yūsuf Bin Gibran¹ (Bin means “the son of”). He was born on December 06, 1883, in the Lebanese village called “Qasbat Bcharri”², according to Mikhā‘īl Nu‘aymah’s writings and Jamīl Jabr’s book on Gibran. However, Jabr mentioned in his second footnote of the same page another date, that is January 06 and not December, of the same year, based on Māy Ziyādah, who was wishing him a happy birthday on this particular date³.

Gibran’s mother is “Kāmilah”, daughter of the priest “Istfān ‘Abd Al-Qādir Raḥmah”⁴. Her husband “Ḥannā ‘Abd Al-Salām Raḥmah” took her with him to Brazil, where he died after she gave birth to a child called “Būṭrūs”. She preferred to go back with her child to live with her parents in Lebanon where she got married again to Khalīl Gibran, and gave birth to three other children: her eldest son Gibran is younger than Būṭrus in six years, Miryānā younger than Gibran in three years, and Sūltānah younger than Gibran in five years⁵. According to this story, Khalīl is her second husband after Ḥannā ‘Abd Al-Salām Raḥmah. However, in another story mentioned in Nabīl Ayyūb’ aforementioned book, Khalīl is her third husband. Her second husband is the rich man Yūsuf Ja‘ja‘, who she divorced after two weeks of marriage⁶.

Gibran’s father was known as a rude person and a heavy drinker, who mistreats the members of his family, is firm with his son since his childhood, and all he cares about is his full vessel. This

¹ Jabr, Jamīl, previous reference, p.14; Khālid Ghassān, *Gibran, The Philosopher*, Nawfal Institution, Beirut, Lebanon, Second Edition, July, 1983, p.20.

² Nu‘aymah, Mikhā‘īl, Previous Reference, p.24.

³ Jabr, Jamīl, Previous Reference, p.14.

⁴ Barbara Yung *This man from Lebanon: A study of Khalil Gibran*, New York, A.A. Knopf, 1945, p. 17

⁵ Jabr, Jamīl, Previous Reference, p.15; Brax, Ghāzī, Previous Reference, p. 68, footnote number 2.

⁶ Ayyūb, Nabīl, Previous Reference, p.268.

is how Jabr explicitly described the father of Gibran¹, as well as Mikhā'īl Nu'aymah did when he made the midwife say to Gibran's Father, on the boy's birthday: "it would be pleasant to see you sober for one day", and the father responds: "your job is to deliver children, and not lecture men about drinking²". In another chapter of Nu'aymah's book, we see how the father kick his child out of the house when he was crying, due to some reasons that Nu'aymah has mentioned in the book, and nothing could have stopped his tears, neither his mother's caressing, nor his father's beating: "you ruined my pleasure of sipping coffee and smoking cigarette, get out of here³." And in another part of his book, we can read what "Būṭrus" says to his mother, when they were determined to travel to Boston: If God helped me, my dad's cigarettes will always be lighten, his coffee will always be ready, and his vessel will always be full with alcohol⁴.

This horrible picture of the father was opposed to another one that looked more realistic. He was easily satisfied, wasn't adventurous, and all he was bound to is counting goats and sheep in urban areas, and collect taxes in favor of the Ottoman regime. Gibran was living with this family an infantile and paradisiac life⁵. Ghāzī Brax described the financial situation of the father as "moderate", he was neither poor nor well-off like some researchers have indicated. Brax also mentioned the other sources of income. In addition to the Ottoman Empire income, Gibran's father was getting paid for counting goats and sheep while sitting on the back of his horse at the remote areas of Bcharrī and its neighborhood, and collecting taxes from its citizens, he was getting paid what is equal to three hundred kilograms of wheat per year from "Marjḥīn" farm in which he owns parts in addition to a number of goats. Moreover, it is possible that Būṭrus was also managing a shop for fabrics⁶.

Gibran, like other boys, was enrolled in Bcharrī School, where he finished at the age of eleven his primary education, and was known as a very smart child. His father tried to convince Sheikh Ṭannūs Ad-Dāhir to take on his account Gibran's education in La Sagesse College in Beirut. However, one evening, while visiting the Sheikh with Gibran, one of the Sheikh's siblings

¹Jabr, Jamīl, Previous Reference, p.15.

² Nu'aymah, Mikhā'īl, Previous Reference, pp. 24-25.

³ Same Reference, p.30.

⁴ Same Reference, p.35.

⁵ Ayyūb, Nabīl, Previous Reference, p.266.

⁶ Brax, Ghāzī, Previous Reference, p.62, footnote number 2 and 3.

advised the father to buy Gibran a goat to take care of, which will serve him better than sending him to school¹.

The first decisive event in the life of Gibran and his family was accusing his father of stealing the taxes money, condemning him to three years of prison, and seizing all his properties². This arbitrary sentence had backgrounds related to the marriage of Kāmilah with Khalīl that should be explained. In fact, Gibran’s mother “Kāmilah” was cohabiting with Khalīl Gibran for several days before the religious authority accepted her second divorce from Yūsuf Ja‘ja‘. This marriage bristle the Maronite clerics with rage, thus they colluded with the feudalists and waited for revenge. To attain their goal, they fabricated a charge against the father and one of the priests filed a lawsuit accusing him of stealing taxes money³. As a result, his innocent father was thrown into prison and his family had to take a decisive decision of traveling to Boston.

Boston

The poor family was obliged to sell even its utensils to be able to travel, and then packed and headed to a new world, the United States, Boston in particular. In that city, the family’s exhausting conflict has started and the second era of Gibran’s life took off.

The family arrived to Boston in 1895. Ghāzī Brax, in his study on Gibran, pointed out the contradiction over the date of the family’s arrival to Boston and he couldn’t determine which one is correct. While Iliyyah Abū Mādī defined, in his journal “As-Safīr”, June as the date of arrival, Jamīl Jabr has determined it in the beginning of the year 1895, only Khalīl Ḥāwī defined it in 1894⁴. The family has settled in Boston, in the Chinese neighborhood, one of the oldest and narrowest neighborhoods in the city, where tobacco hookah and opium are widely spread, in addition to dice tables on dirty sidewalks. In this neighborhood, “Būṭrus” opened a little shop for

¹ Same Reference, p.67; Jabr, Jamīl, pp.18-19.

² Ayyūb, Nabīl, Previous Reference, p.267.

³ Same reference, same page, Al-Ḥilū Al-Laḥḥām, Aghāt Mas‘ad, *Theosophy And Its Reflection On Gibran Kahlil’s Literature*, Diploma in Arabic language and Literature, Lebanese University - Faculty of Humanities, Second Branch, Al-Fanār, 2001, (304 pages), p. 96, footnote number 2.

⁴ Brax, Ghāzī, Previous Reference, p. 68, footnote number 1.

fragment iron, while Gibran went to a nearby school. His mother was preparing to work in sewing with her two daughters in the corners of a dark apartment¹.

After Gibran’s brother succeeded in his work, he moved him to a better school, and did his best to provide him the best education. In this school, Gibran’s photographic talent attracted his teachers that gave his work to one of the most famous photographer in the city who started inviting Gibran over². At the photographer workshop, he met a woman in her thirties, in who he fell in love, and started visiting her repeatedly despite his family gloom and her concern about him. After a year full of secret visits to the secrete house³, Gibran was no longer as interested as he was in photography and science, and he was on the edge of forgetting to return to Lebanon to learn Arabic even though he has discussed this project with his brother and the latter promised to help me⁴. However, with the indirect and silent assistance of his mother and family members, he got over this relationship and started reconsidering going back to Lebanon, to achieve his goal in learning Arabic. Finally, he took his decision, and packed his books, photos, clothes, left Boston⁵ and headed to Beirut.

Beirut, La Sagesse College and Bcharri

According to Jamīl Jabr⁶, Gibran arrived to Lebanon in autumn 1898. But Brax insisted that his return was on the third of August of the same year, after he has found that date written by Gibran himself on the last page of an English book offered to the latter by the famous American photographer “Fred Holland Day”⁷. It seems that Gibran’s arrival to Beirut coincided with the beginning of the academic year, or close to its beginning, so he enrolled in La Sagesse College, one of the most prestigious national schools in city. This school was founded by the archbishop “Yūsuf Ad-Dibs” pastor of the Beirut Maronite Bishopric.

¹ Jabr, Jamīl, previous reference, p. 20.

² Jabr, Jamīl, previous reference, same page.

³ Nu’aymah wrote in details about Gibran’s relationship with the lady in several pages: from p. 41 until p. 54. Despite these details, ambiguity is still surrounding this story in all its aspects, especially the relationship between them and the facts related to her presence in Gibran’s life.

⁴ Jabr, Jamīl, Same Reference, p. 20.

⁵ Same Reference, P. 21.

⁶ Same Reference p. 22.

⁷ Brax, Ghāzī, Previous Reference, p. 69, footnote number 1.

Gibran visited his father in Bcharrī and got back to Beirut, and wandered through its blocks. He was obsessed with Mār Mitr hill which he visited repeatedly after an exhausting day at school. Gibran learned Arabic from the priest Yūsuf Al-Ḥaddād, the professor of rhetoric at La Sagesse College¹, who advised him to read many Arabic books such as “Kalīlah wa Dūmnaḥ”, “Al-Aghānī” “eloquence approach” and “Torah”, and Gibran worked upon his advice. He was known in La Sagesse College, as a quick-witted, stubborn, independent student who craved for education².

His enrollment in school as well as his residence in Beirut and his visits to his hometown Bcharrī were a very fruitful period that changed his life. In Beirut, he met the painter “Ḥabīb Srūr”, and in the school, he created a weekly scholar journal called “An-Naḥḍah” (the rise), in which he introduced some of his illustrations... One of his most prominent colleagues and assistance was “Yūsuf Ḥūwayyik” and the poet “Bchārah Al-Khūrī”³. Gibran would’ve never stopped visiting Bcharrī. He went there the second summer after his return to Lebanon to spend the summer vacation with his father, and maybe to show off with his achievements, especially in front of Ad-Ḍāhir, whom he visited once and was taken by the beauty of Sheikh Ṭannūs’s daughter and fell deeply in love with her. This happened in the summer of 1899⁴. This particular year was marked as the beginning of Gibran’s relationship with “Ḥalā Al-Ḍāhir”. However, Gibran couldn’t achieve his goal due to the strong and indestructible feudal separation barrier, which destroys Gibran’s dreams as well as other poor peoples. Education, knowledge and progress in life have no meaning or purpose in an era where deluded and inherited glories are based on ignorance, austerity and bigotry. What do the individuals get in return? From here, the well-known story began.

¹ His original name was “Dominic”. He was born in ‘Ayn Kfā’--the village of the famous Lebanese author Mārūn ‘Abbūd), in the district of Jbayl. He was born in 1865 and died in 1949. He started teaching rhetoric in Sagesse School in 1899. He taught Gibran Arabic, and he authored a number of books (both printed and manuscripts). Gibran dedicated his book *Al-Ajnihah al Mutakassirah (The Broken Wings)* to him, and wrote to him, “you are the prime of my first blossoms”. Correspondence between the two lasted for a good while until Gibran received a letter from his former teacher criticizing him for badmouthing the clergy. (Brax, p. 76, n. 4).

² Jabr, Jamīl, Same Reference, pp. 18-19; Brax, Ghāzī, Previous Reference, p. 67.

³ Jabr, Jamīl, Previous Reference, pp. 22, 24.

⁴ Same Reference, p. 24.

After spending four years of his life under this autocracy regime, Gibran decided in 1902 to go back to Boston where his mother, brother and sisters are residing. He held a grudge toward the political and religious feudalists, had a desire to revolt against oppression, frustration, and immobility, and he was bitter and twisted about marriage of convenience... A passionate love for home was engraved in his heart pushing him back to return and lifted all the impediments...¹.

Boston again

This time, Gibran didn't attend school like he used to. He became a businessman, and he worked really hard on himself and on drawing. He wrote prose in a poetic style but was not satisfied and decided to tear the papers, because he felt the desired expression is still missing. He did the same with a number of drawings that he did in that period because they didn't reflect the one in his imagination which he visualizes while closing his eyes².

A short visit to Beirut

In that period, his Friend "Fred Holland Day" asked him to be the touristic guide of a wealthy American family in the Near East, Gibran accepted his request and accompanied the family as a touristic guide and translator³.

The American Family sailed with Gibran from the United States in the beginning of February in 1902. They first stopped in London, then in Paris, passed by Italy, and reached Beirut after several days. Khalīl knew that his son arrived to the city, and that "Sūltānah" is seriously ill, thus he wrote him to get more details. Gibran denied the news and reassured him that his sister is fine, and explained to him the reasons behind his visit. But soon Gibran received a letter from Boutros notifying him that not only his sister died of tuberculosis but his mother is also infected and her life is in real danger, and he asked him to get back as fast as possible⁴.

¹ Same Reference, p. 25; Brax, Ghāzī, Previous Reference, p. 490.

² Jabr, Jamīl, Previous Reference, p. 30.

³ Jabr, Jamīl, Previous Reference, p. 30, Al-Ḥilū Al-Laḥḥām", Aghāt Mas'ad, *Theosophy and its impact on Gibran's literature*, Previous Reference, pp. 93-94.

⁴ Jabr, Jamīl, Previous Reference, pp. 31-32.

Back to Boston

Before May comes, Gibran came back to Boston and stayed frustrated beside his mother's bed who was treated and totally cured. In a short time, Gibran started working hardly, writing, painting, and reading without taking rests. As a result, he got infected by a lifelong chronic disease. What made things worse is the shocking and tragic death of Būṭrus in 12 March, and Kāmilah in 20 June in 1903¹.

Gibran suppressed his grief and continued to work very hard. During that period, a Lebanese journalist called "Amīn Al-Ghūrayyib" came to Boston. He had already read all Gibran's writings and was impressed so he convinced him to publish them in "Al-Mūhājir" journal (The Emigrant). On 5 March 1903, Gibran's first article was published in this journal under the title of "vision", from which Jamīl Jabr excerpted many sentences and put it in his book².

The financial state of Gibran remained bad and he did not have the chance to improve it. While he was drowning in financial problems, Miryānā continued to support him and Gibran continued to live with her in their two rooms humble house in "Edenburg Street", before he moved to "Oliver" street number 15, then to Taylor" street number 17. During this period, he started to miss "Ḥalā Ad-Dāhir" and her shadow hunted him along the way, so he extracted out of his feelings a painting, which is still preserved in Bcharrī's museum³.

Gibran continued to publish his thoughts in Al-Mūhājir journal. Afterwards, Al-Manār Journal, issued by Qoṣṭanṭīn Yannī in Beirut, published them intentionally under the title "a Tear and a Smile", and praised his work. Another prominent writer was also publishing his article in the same journal, Ameen Rihani. And during that period, Gibran out stepped short articles and published in 1905 in a separate notebook a personal research on music which gained success after its publication⁴.

During this tough period of his life, Gibran found comfort and consolation in getting closer to Josephine Peabody, an American poet who he met previously, during his first stay in Boston

¹ Same Reference, pp. 32-33, 36; Brax defines the date of death of Gibran's mother in his book on 28 June, p. 149, footnote number 2.

² Jabr, Jamīl, Previous Reference, pp. 36-38.

³ Jabr, Jamīl, Previous Reference, p. 39.

⁴ Jabr, Jamīl, Previous Reference, pp. 40- 41.

when he was fifteen and she was twenty-four. She was impressed by his integration to the Boston School of Art and his admiration to the mysticism of Maeterlinck “and” Emerson”. She repeatedly mentioned him in her diaries, calling him an angel. She even wrote a poem about him entitled “the prophet”, and she often called him by “My little prophet”. Maybe Gibran owes her the title of his famous book, which was issued approximately twenty years after that date¹.

After Gibran had a good collection of drawings, his friend “Fred Holland Day” exhibited them in his studio. Fred Holland Day is the pioneer of the Literary and Art Renaissance in Boston, and the advisor of the volunteers who take care of the immigrant population in the city. He knew Gibran when the latter’s teacher called “Jessie Vermont Bill” in the official school of Quincy, where Gibran was enrolled when he first came to Boston, shortened the name of Gibran to “Kahlil Gibran” in her letter to “Day”, which will be the name of our genius in the United States. “Day” was seeking to bring out the best of the little artist in drawing and in expanding his knowledge in literature. He also presented him to Boston elites². The exhibition was held in 1904; “Marie Haskell” attended it among others. At that time, she was thirty one³. When she first stepped into Day’s studio, a profound relationship was concluded between her and Gibran, a relation that even time could not stop or erase. Mary Elisabeth Haskell She is the head of “Miss Haskell” school for girls, located in the city, in Marlboro Street. That’s why “Nu’aymah” called her “director” in his book and described her in a vivid and interesting image: he portrayed her features in details, her body, the way she walks, talks and thinks. He described her morals, among other things related to her behavior and wisdom toward the daily life events, and those she met in her cycle of life⁴.

When Nu’aymah wanted to presumptively and prematurely evaluate the permanent relationship between her and Gibran, he described the vision of a child, of ten years old directly after he finished stating the events of Gibran’s birth. He tells the story of a ten years old girl, waking up of a dream and trying to recuperate her vision. All what she could mostly remember is a white

¹ Al-Hilū Al-Laḥḥām, Aghāt Mas’ad, Previous Reference, pp. 90, 94.

² Al-Hilū Al-Laḥḥām, Aghāt Mas’ad, Previous Reference, pp. 93-94. In a quick note, Nabīl Ayyūb indicates that there was a temporary homosexual relationship between “Day” and Gibran, stating the reasons behind the approval of the latter. Brax, in his study on Gibran’s position on homosexuality, he said that Gibran showed a strong refusal and abhorrence, especially to homosexuality. (P. 142, footnote number 2).

³ Al-Hilū Al-Laḥḥām, Aghāt Mas’ad, Previous Reference, p. 95.

⁴ Nu’aymah, Mikhā’īl, Previous Reference, pp. 74, 82-83.

long thread tied on her waist, reaching the shore and dancing with the waves until it is lost in the distant horizon, down to the other side of the earth¹. The ten years child is Haskell and Gibran is ten years younger than her.

Mary visited the exhibition of Gibran on 10 May 1904, afterwards she asked Gibran to pay her a visit in her school, and then, in the same year, she organized an exhibition there for his drawings. It lasted for few weeks, and nearly every afternoon, Gibran showed up to explain his drawings to the visitors. During his visit, he met a friend of Mary, Mademoiselle Emily Michelle, a French school teacher, who is known by her friends as “Micheline”. Mary was paying her well with some regular financial gifts². “Brax” estimates that her friendship with Gibran wasn’t tight until he drew her for the first time on 06 February 1908³.

In the beginning, the relationship between Haskell and Gibran was full of tense. Mary was mocking his body shape⁴; in addition to that he fell for her friend Josephine before her. However, their relationship became soon tight and stable, especially after Josephine got married to Haskell’s Friend, “Lionel Marx”. After Lionel disappointed her, Mary found the cure to her wounds in Gibran, and in his turn, he found in her a secure resort that compensates the absence of Josephine. For this new beginning, he gave her as a gift the first collection of his short stories titled “Spirit Brides”⁵.

Gibran started to meet with Mary in school or at her house, where he met her friend “Charlotte Teller”. She was the same age as Mary and was newly divorced. Mary was granting her on regular basis, financial aid. After the friendship between Mary and Gibran became tight, she

¹ Same Reference, pp. 28-29, 78.

² Al-Hilū Al-Lahhām, Aghāt Mas’ad, Previous Reference, p. 96, footnote number 2.

³ Brax, Ghāzī, Previous Reference, pp. 146-147. Nu’aymah, Mikhā’il, Previous Reference, p. 79. Nu’aymah describes Micheline in his book, in a beautiful and precise way that goes beyond the one of Haskell.

⁴ Brax, Ghāzī, previous reference, p. 84. Barbara Yung found that Gibran’s tallness doesn’t exceed 160 cm and that this fact was pretty annoying to him. However, she said that his hand were made strong and was able to work continuously, but he never bragged about his strong muscles to hide his imperfection. He only wished if he was a little bit taller. (Previous reference, p. 34). In another subject, she talked about the extraordinary power of his hand which was granted to him by the nature: “if he shook the hand of his visitor (...) the latter will cry of pain (...) Gibran always told us that he thinks for a minute before shaking visitor’s hand so he doesn’t hurt him. (Same reference, p. 32). However, Jamīl Jabr states that Gibran wasn’t short, his tallness was 163 cm. (Jabr, Jamīl, Previous Reference, p. 95). Brax quotes Yang and states that Gibran’s tallness doesn’t exceed five feet and three or four inches.

⁵ Al-Hilū Al-Lahhām, Aghāt Mas’ad, Previous Reference, p. 95. “Spirit Brides” collection of short stories published by Gibran in 1906.

decided to surround Gibran as well as two other artists with care and kindness. On her account, she sent him to Paris to master drawing in one of its biggest academies¹. Gibran left his friends and Boston, to travel to Paris, the Capital of art, literature, and dreams. Micheline arrived before him to the city, and resided in a place near to Gibran’s residence, so he asked Mary to send him letters on her address².

In Paris

Gibran resided in “Vaugirard” Street, in the 1st floor of a regular big building, occupied by artists only and located near “Raspail” and “Montparnasse” avenues. He got enrolled in “Julian Academy for photography” and not in the “Beaux Arts Academy” as Nu’aymah stated, where he was taught the techniques of painting by the painter “Jean Paul Laurens”. At the same time, he practiced and mastered the French language in order to advance in his courses easily³. In Paris, he met “Yūsuf Al-Ḥūwayyik”, his old colleague in “La Sagesse” College. They renewed their friendship, followed together the path of art, and started their new life in that city of greatness. They paid together regular visits to the museums and exhibitions to adopt and keep up with the art evolution in order to promote their art performance. They also visited theaters, museums, and spent most of their times in music halls and opera houses. They also used to take their lunch at the same restaurant in “Raspail” avenue⁴.

According to what “Al-Ḥūwayyik” told “Jabr” and “Brax” agree on, Gibran and his sculptor friend “Al-Ḥūwayyik” had the same prostitute, she was an Italian named “Rosina”, who “was often angry because of Gibran’s coldness towards her”⁵. However, most of his friends were Americans residing in the Capital of France, and he always tried to delude them in order to impress them by talking about his nobility. Gibran had very few Lebanese friends in France, “Jabr” names two of them: “Abbās Al-Bijjānī” and “Yūsuf Rūḥayyim”, the latter’s wife has left

¹ Previous Reference, pp. 95-96. Nu’aymah mentions in his book that the amount of money which Mary decided to give to Gibran in order to continue his studies in Paris, was seventy-five dollars per month, until he graduates. She also promised him to pay his travel fees. (Nu’aymah, Mikhā’il, previous reference, p. 93).

² Brax, Ghāzī, Previous Reference, p. 147, footnote number 1.

³ Jabr, Jamīl, Previous Reference, pp. 72-73.

⁴ Same Reference, pp. 72, 23.

⁵ Same Reference, p. 74, footnote number 1; Ghāzī Brax, Previous Reference, pp. 72-73, footnote number 6.

him after being totally influenced by “Wardah Al-Hānī”, the hero in one of Gibran’s books, titled “Spirits Rebellious”¹.

Gibran wanted always to meet in Paris the creative French sculptor “Francois Auguste Rene Rodin”. In fall 1909, an American artist and friend of him made his dream come true. His repeated meetings with him left a big trace in Gibran’s soul and art. On one hand, Gibran adopted from Rodin’s art the precision in portraying a body, the natural agility in the movement dynamics, in addition to the meaning it represents. On the other hand, “Rodin” predicted a bright future for Gibran through a letter he sent to his friend “Henri Beaufour”².

In Paris, Gibran learned also about “William Blake” poetry, literature and art after reading the biography written by “Alexander Gilchrist”³. He felt the urge to know more about “Blake” and was really impressed by his work in various aspects.

Gibran visited often the “Louvre” museum where he stood still observing and reverencing its gorgeous paintings. For many times, he compared those paintings with his, which made him more determined to succeed and prove himself in the world of art and bestowment. He started to work hard and to move between the northern Seine Rivers, where “Louvre” museum, Tuilerie gardens, and Bois de Boulogne are located, and southern Seine rivers, where the university, “Les Invalides”, the Eiffel tower, and the Luxembourg castle are situated. By quoting “Gibran Twaynī” in a special edition of “Al-Makshūf” newspaper about Gibran Kahlil, Jabr mentioned a funny story in which Twaynī saw Gibran sweating with his straight reddish brown hair, in one of the photo galleries in the “Louvre”, sitting in an eastern corner, and copying one of the amazing paintings on a piece of clothing⁴.

Gibran’s travel to Paris was full of benefits. He could for example draw the most prominent artists of the Capital at that time, such as the great journalist “Henri de Rochefort”, the innovator musician “Claude Debussy”, the mystic symbolic writer “Maurice Maeterlinck”, the theatrical

¹ Jabr, Jamīl, pp. 73-74.

² Ibid, pp. 77-79.

³ Ibid, p. 79.

⁴ Ibid, p. 82. Jabr didn’t mention neither the date nor the number of Al-Makshūf newspaper.

poet “Edmond Rostand”, in addition to “Peppino Garbieldi”, and “Rodin”. His travel has also enabled him to rewrite his book “The Prophet”. He finished his first draft, two years after his arrival to Beirut to continue his education in “La Sagesse” College. But as he folded the first draft when he and his mother found that it wasn’t yet ready to be published, he did the same with the second one and didn’t publish it, when he remembered the advice of his deceased mother.

Paris visit wasn’t supposed to last more than a year, but it passed so fast before Gibran could show his drawings in a famous exhibition. The visit to Paris doesn’t count if the artist couldn’t expose his paintings in a famous place visited by people and where a strict jury is present to criticize his work. Waiting and expanding the visit was his only solution. This idea was of Mary’s in the first place, and he agreed with her. On 7 March 1910, Gibran wrote a letter to his cousin “Nakhleh” to inform him his readiness to expose his drawings in a French art show. On 7 May of the same year, he sends a letter to “Nakhleh”, emphasizing the importance of this show, which is modern and is as important as the poetry in pre-Islamic era, telling him about his remarkable success in this exhibition, and that the committee approved on hanging his drawing beside the paintings of the most prominent artists. Gibran describes his painting in this same letter saying: “it represents autumn through a topless woman who the air plays in her hair and veil. In the way she stands in the picture, the colors used, and the things that surround her, show the anguish between the summer joy and winter sadness”.

Rihani in Paris

Gibran had surely a dear friendship with Rihani before the quarrel took place. This is evident in Rihani’s visit to Paris in 1910, when Gibran was still there, and they spent more than one month together, then they left together to London where they have spent another month. Afterwards, Gibran came back to Paris, and Rihani moved to the States.

The researchers have wrote different dates and aims of this visit. However, after many researches done by the Professor Ameen Albert Rihani, in addition to the new documents he owns, all doubts related to the date and goal, in addition to the real relationship between these two have been erased.

The Tempests and the Forerunner

In 1920, a book for Gibran entitled “The Tempests” was published. This book is a collection of articles and stories that appeared in several newspapers and magazines between the years 1912 and 1918. In selecting and joining them between the covers of the book, Gibran maintained “the moral familiarity or the artistic unity between them.” “Dār Al-Hilāl” publishing house, owned by Emile Zaydān, took over printing and publishing the book. Gibran had liked the way “A Tear and a Smile” was published before, so he wanted “The Tempests” to be similar: In the font brevity of lines, similar layout, similar font, similar page. He also wanted Najīb Bek Hawāwīnī, the famous calligrapher of Egypt, to calligraphy the title in Persian letter¹. Indeed, the book was published in the same brilliant way its author desired and it caused a whirlwind in the Arab East. Nonetheless, even though “The Tempests” represents the peak of the Gibranian rebellion; it also represents the end of a phase and paves the way for the beginning of a new phase in the development of Gibranian thought.

A little while after “The Tempests” and during the same year, “The Forerunner” was published. The latter is another collection of tales and proverbs as well as prose poems mostly handling the misery of the spirit in the materialistic world and its constant yearning to embrace the overall cosmic spirit. Apparently, Gibran wanted this book precluding to his book “The Prophet”, and many researchers find that the naming of the book was probably derived from the forerun of John the Baptist to Christ.

After “The Forerunner” and before “The Prophet”

During the next year, in 1912, Gibran published “Aram of the Pillars”, a theatrical play that shapes the osmotic mystic theory in man, life and the universe. In the beginning of 1923, his book “The New and The Marvelous” was published in Egypt and marked with it the end of the series of his Arabic books. “The New and The Marvelous” is a collection of articles including perhaps most notably: “Al-Qūshūr wal-Lūbāb”, “My Soul Preached Me” and “You Have Your Lebanon and I Have Mine.” He also decorated the book with a group of drawings for some of the great philosophers and veteran poets of the Arabs. “Young” mentions in her book that Gibran set

¹ Jabr, Jamīl, Previous Reference, p. 132.

these drawings when he was seventeen years old, and that his drawing of Avicenna is identical to the picture of Leonardo Di Vinci, because he believed that they had a striking resemblance¹.

The Prophet

Gibran had barely finished from “The Forerunner” when he started thinking about a new “follow-up” book. In a meeting between him and Naimy, the latter asks him about this “follow-up” so Gibran tells him that he had started the first part of it but had not yet finished, and that it is filling up all his life: He sleeps with it, gets up with it, and eats and drinks with it.²

“The Prophet” has an interesting story that occupies a big part of Gibran’s life and was mentioned by learners in their studies about Gibran. Barbara Young claims that he put a first draft for the book 2 years after his arrival to Beirut to enroll in the Sagesse High School. When Gibran was 20 years old, he read the draft to his mother in Boston, and then he folded it based on her advice. He rewrote it when he was 25, and also folded it after reading it to himself. Ten years later, during his stay in New York, “he wrote the first English copy for that timeless book...this copy was not a translation from the Arabic copy, but an innovative English one, and he handwrote it five times in five consecutive full years, before it was handed to a publisher.”³

I was a habit of Gibran “to write in brown pamphlets, and he did not change that color since the days of his discipleship till the rest of his life. He usually started every pamphlet with a phrase he wrote in Arabic.” He calligraphed “The Prophet” on two pamphlets and wrote at the beginning of the first “Dear brother, your pain is my pain”, and on the second: “God help me express the truth with what my pencil draws from verses of beauty in this pamphlet⁴.”

Gibran chose for his book a very unique drafting template, so he put words in the mouth of an extremely wise man, and raised him to the level of prophets one time, and made his listeners turn their speech to him and say “O prophet of God” and “the selection of the name by itself carries

¹ Yung, Barbara, Previous Reference, p. 26; Jabr, Jamīl, Previous Reference, p. 144; Al-Ḥilū Al-Laḥḥām, Previous Reference, pp. 110-111.

² Nu’aymah, Mikhā’il, Previous Reference, p. 184.

³ Yung, Barbara, Previous Reference pp. 28-30; Jabr, Jamīl, Previous Reference, p.153.

⁴ Same Reference, p. 214.

glory and respect. Likewise, with one word, the artist Gibran raised the value or poetry of the poet Gibran to the level of prophecy even before uttering it.”¹

It is apparent that Gibran had been inspired in his drafting template by the bible in its old and new testaments and had borrowed from it some “verbal models” for example: “truly truly I say to you” and “you were told...but I tell you...” He took as well from Nietzsche’s style in his book “Thus Spoke Zarathustra.” It is also known that the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche and his mentioned book had a deep effect on the Gibranian thought and on steering the rebellion and revolution especially during and before “The Tempests”. It is also known how Nietzsche and Zarathustra’s effect decreased with time, and how it had almost faded out from the Gibran before “The Madman” and directly after it”.²

Gibran set twelve drawings for his book “The Prophet”, out of which 10 were in water paint and two in pencil and the latter are the drawing of Al-Mūṣṭafah in the beginning of the book and “The Creative Hand” at the end. Naimy finds in the drawings of “The Prophet” far symbols and a magnificent artistic harmony. Nonetheless, he says that “the shape of some of them reached a softness to the extent of relaxation and femininity that one could love in a woman’s art, but would not in a man’s art.”³

“The Prophet” was published in the last third of 1923, and one thousand three hundred copies were printed and sold out from the bookstores within one month.⁴

After its publication, when Mary Haskell received a copy of it, she wrote to Gibran, expecting with a visionary intuition what this book will represent in English literature and for the human generation: “This book will be considered a treasure from the treasures of English literature, and we will open it during our dark times to convert to ourselves, and find the sky inside of us and the human generations will take from it, and it will not run out, on the contrary, this book will be

¹ Nu’aymah, Mīkhā’īl, Previous Reference, p. 214.

² We point out here that Naimy prolongs the speech and comparison between “Zarathustra” Nietzsche and “Prophet” Gibran (Nu’aymah, Mīkhā’īl, Previous Reference, pp. 215-219). He had also previously prolonged the speech and exaggerated in estimating the dimensions of Nietzsche’s effects on the thoughts of Gibran and his writings. For more in regards to this side, revise the following pages from his book: 137-148.

³ Nu’aymah, Mīkhā’īl, Previous Reference, pp. 219-220.

⁴ Al-Ḥilū Al-Laḥḥām, Aghāt Mas’ad, Previous Reference, p.111.

a beneficial reference that people turn to one generation after the other. They will love it and admire it more and more as they grow more mature.”¹

In regards to “The Prophet”, three years after its publication, Gibran said to his friend Ḥabīb Mas‘ūd in a letter in February 1926 the following: “All I can tell you now in the small book (...) that is has reached its tenth edition in English, and has been translated into ten European languages and into Japanese and Hindustani from Eastern languages. As for the opinion of the folks in regards to the book from Woodrow Wilson to the greatest English poet to the most famous French writer to Gandhi of India to the simplest workers, to the wife and mother, what I never saw coming. This is why I find myself sometimes flattered in front of people’s compassion and generosity.”²

“The Prophet” achieved great fame in the West, especially in the United States of America, and it has been translated to more than thirty languages including French, German, Hebrew and Chinese. In addition, the book proclaimed Gibran’s fame outside the frame of literature: in clubs, forums, associations and theater. In one of its issues, “The Tourist” published the news that “The Prophet” was read in one of the churches in New York. Naimy recounts, with a sense of disapproval and wonder, that he attended with Nasīb ‘Arīḍah and Abd-el-Masīḥ Ḥaddād, with an invitation from Gibran, a ceremony of “readings” from the latter’s writings in the church of St. Mark in New York, a bishopric church in “the Browery”, and one of the oldest churches of the city. Nu‘aymah calibrates such ceremonies in the context of Gibran’s cleverness in broadcasting the “nice advertisement” that he used to pave the way for his creations and works³. In this church, the church of St. Mark New York, it was meant for Barbara Young to listen “to a verse from “The Prophet”, who’s reading was dedicated to “Butler Davenport”, one of the most famous men of theater. “That occasion was the first step that led her to read “The Prophet”, and

¹ Al-Ḥilū Al-Laḥḥām, Aghāt Mas‘ad, Previous Reference, p. 112, from: My beloved prophet (love letters between Mary Haskell and Gibran with Haskell’s diary), collected by Youssef Al Hourani, Al-jarīdah al-Ahliyyah Printing House, Beirut, 1974, p.115

² Jabr, Jamīl, Previous Reference, p. 157.

³ Naimy, Mīkhā‘īl, Previous Reference, p 224-226; Concerning the topic of recitation of excerpts from Gibran’s books in churches and temples, Marūn Abbūd clarifies in his book “New and Old” (commercial printing, Beirut, 1954, p. 86), that those churches are stages not more, and it is an issue well known in Protestant communities regarding its diversity.

then to get to know Gibran. One of the most amusing things that Young recounted about “The Prophet” is that its publisher in Holland sent its author only 24 USD¹ after translating it.

“Clay and Roofs”

Several years after Gibran’s coming to New York, a wave of trade of properties overshadowed the United States. Nu‘aymah called it “the wave of gambling with clay and roofs”. It occurred to Gibran, and he saved up a certain amount of money to go with the flow, hoping to improve his financial situation. Therefore, he bought a building in Boston in Partnership with a “Syrian” man and they paid one fifth of its price in cash, and paid the rest in installments. Moreover, they had to make some renovations and modifications to it, which forced them to pay more amounts of money. Eventually, things turned on them, and the profits they worked very hard to earn turned into a big loss. After a short while, Gibran did it again and got into this trade, so he bought forty shares from the building he lived in, but his deal was a winning one this time.²

After “The Prophet”

1. Sand and Foam

After “The Prophet” was published, Gibran started thinking of another book to publish. But he needed a period of rest and complacency that will enable him to gather his thoughts to face afterwards the midst of setting a new writing of a no lesser level, especially that his health had deteriorated a lot, at this stage of his life, and his strength had started to fade more and more. Thus, he resorted to a group of reflections he had written some of in Arabic, and then he switched it to English, and added a new group to it that he had directly written in English. These reflections, which he had calligraphed in his own hands, in addition to another part he had given to Barbara to do, got published in the beginning of December 1926 under the title “Sand and Foam”, and it came out as “filling a gap” in his life of writing or as an “isthmus” connecting “The Prophet” and the book that was published afterwards (Jesus, The Son of Man) and holding the same importance.³

¹ Yung, Barbara, Previous Reference, p. 8, 9.

² Jabr, Jamīl, Previous Reference, pp. 148-150; Nu‘aymah, Mīkhā’īl, Previous Reference, pp. 228-229. Nu‘aymah sets, in p. 295 of his book, a paragraph text he sent to him from Boston on a Thursday night of February 1923 telling him about his struggles with that loss.

³ Jabr, Jamīl, Previous Reference, p.165; Nu‘aymah, Mīkhā’īl, Previous Reference, p. 238.

2. Jesus, The Son of Man

After “Sand and Foam”, Gibran was determined to put two other books to complete what he had started in “The Prophet” to address the relationship between humans: The first addressed the relationship between man and nature and will be entitled “The Garden of the Prophet”. The second addresses the relationship of man with God and shall be entitled “The Death of the Prophet”, and thus the rings of the chain with its 3 dimensions will be complete: man, nature, and God who is the purpose of all purposes.¹

However, Gibran drifted from his determination for a while and started his book on Jesus. Nonetheless, the expressive template he adopted this time to market his ideas was innovative and completely different than that he used in “The Prophet”. He made the contemporaries of Jesus speak about him, each according to his or her understanding and disputes. This is how he rotated the speech on the tongue of seventy seven men and women, some of whom are mentioned in the bible and others a figure of his fertile imagination. A man concludes after nineteen generations the talks about Jesus, and thus concluding the image of Jesus that Gibran wanted to convey to people, a true image in his point of view.

As in the habit in his previous books Gibran put in this book a series of drawings, in this case reaching a new apogee of his fine art, including: The face of Jesus, which is the first things the eye falls on in the book, and, the face of Mary Magdalene, the face of Peter, and another of John the beloved. In addition to two other colored drawings, one of “the tree of life” and the other of a man kneeling on a cloud surrounded by a chain of human bodies. The book was published in the fall of 1928, and Gibran was at that time in Boston.²

3. The Earth Gods

This book was the last of Gibran’s to be published while he was still alive. He completed it at the beginning of 1931 and briefed Nu’aymah about its manuscript when he visited the latter around that time of that year. The book was published in March of that same year, around 2 weeks

¹ Nu’aymah, *Mīkhā’īl*, Previous Reference, p. 238; Jabr, Jamīl, Previous Reference, p. 165.

² Nu’aymah, *Mīkhā’īl*, pp. 239-240, 247; Jabr, Jamīl, Previous Reference, p. 172.

before his death. “The Earth Gods” is a prose poem with an epic character, “with 3 voices representing 3 spirits or gods, each having his or her own tendency and perspective of people and their lives. The first god is a frowning formidable one who is bored with people ... and bored with his tyranny and divinity to an extent that he started seeking nowhere ... the second is a god who enjoys playing with the earth and all living on it ..., but the third god listens to his friends, with his eyesight wandering the valley, watching a boy and a girl dance for love in the valley¹”.

In “The Earth Gods”, Gibran expresses his most important views about the world and life that has fermented and matures with experience and testing. For the glory of man “does not start until the sacred gods’ lips suck his aimlessly wandering breeze... and all that is human has no value if it stays human.²”

In this book also, Gibran did not restrict from his habit, so he also set for it twelve drawings from the most exquisite drawings he produced. When Gibran showed them to him, Nu‘aymah found a power he rarely saw embodied in his art to such extent, in addition to what it carries from familiarity, agility, and harmony of colors.³

4. The Wanderer

Gibran sent Mary Haskell a draft from “The Wanderer” so she could correct it, just like he usually did with all his books published in English, and that was around a month before his death. When he passed away, the draft was still with her and she had not finished reading it yet. Its first edition came out in 1932 from A. Knopf, New York, more than one year after his death.

5. The Garden of The Prophet

Gibran was determined to publish his book as a completion to what he had already stated of his perspective concerning the relationship of humans with each other in “The Prophet” and he handles in this the relationship of man with God; as previously mention. However, for unknown reasons, he changed his plans and intended to put his writings aforementioned. After his death, uncompleted journals and diaries that he had been working on to finish this book were found in

¹ Nu‘aymah, Mīkhā‘īl, Previous Reference, pp. 255, 257-259.

² Jabr, Jamīl, Previous Reference, pp. 175-176.

³ Nu‘aymah, Mīkhā‘īl, Previous Reference, p. 259.

his records. Therefore, Barbara Young took them and published them in a book in 1933, around two years after his death. There is nonetheless a clear contrast in regards to her work on this book. In a first signal to her she mentions that Gibran “had made a different piece, but did not connect what is in between and did not set a plan for his composition”, and that a lot of things that he said about “the garden” triggered her memory in her mind”, also that her work does not exceed this limit. In a second signal she clarifies that it appeared to her and still does, that all the pages that she should have (written) in “The Garden of the Prophet”, were published directly with a specific awareness, as Gibran said, it is the poetry that is the words that are a must in a position that is a must.”¹ This shows that her work was not just limited to correcting, but exceeded it to the extent of inventing and modifying.

Gibran’s Illness and Death

The symptoms of illness appeared on Gibran during the early years of his youth, and these symptoms were increasing his painstaking studiousness to constant work on one side, and his profusion in smoking and redundancy in drinking coffee and alcohol on the other side.

In the morning of one of the days in the beginning of 1907, he woke up in pain. “A heavy gout seizure recurred to him so he groaned and squirmed...” and he stayed that day in bed and did not write or draw. The doctor required him a strict precaution that he reluctantly agreed to. In a letter from him to his friend, Jamīl Ma‘lūf - in 1907- who asked him about his health in a previous letter he sent to Gibran, the latter said: “My health is as you stipulate, like a guitar in the hands of someone who can’t play it, it gives tunes that are unpleasant to him².” In Paris, illness returned to him and his pain intensified, so he told his friend Al-Ḥūwayyik: “No doubt I will die before you (...) please (...) please put on my grave a roaring lion³.” In Paris also, out of precaution, we see him choosing milk over wine with food⁴. Years pass by fast and the disease intensifies on him more and more. And there he is in a letter from him to Nu‘aymah from Boston, at the end of summer 1921, saying: “Since I have come to this city I am moving from one specialized doctor

¹ Brax, Ghazi, Previous Reference, pp. 36-37.

² Jabr, Jamīl, pp. 55, 57, 60.

³ Brax, Ghāzī, Previous Reference, p. 84, footnote number 3.

⁴ Jabr, Jamīl, Previous Reference, p. 74.

to another and from one accurate test to a more accurate one...”¹ and he continues, regardless of that, coping with the disease and thinking of it as a tremble in the heart that will go away with protection and precaution, but it was not disappearing,” but varying in its symptoms and intensifying in its pain, and he thought it was a gout tearing in his joints, or a strong cold hitting his respiratory system, or a malady in his heart when the pain squeezed it.² During this whole suffering, he remained scrupulous of his work, holding his pencil and brush.

Finally, after long suffering, x-rays showed the ambush of the disease, so he kept it from everyone. A doctor in Boston advised him of the necessity to undertake a surgical procedure, and he assigned him an appointment. On the due date, Gibran left his house to head to the hospital, but when he reached the end of the stairs; he changed his mind about going and gave up again for fate. “In his retraction there was hardness, and in his surrender unfairness. He never complained from his illness, quetched his age, or despaired from his life (...)³

At the beginning of 1931, Nu‘aymah came to visit him after speaking with him over the phone asking about his health and asking him to come to him. So he found him in his bed, with signs of extreme weakness he had never seen on him before. So Gibran reassured him saying that it was nothing but “a strong breakout.” Four days before his death, Abd-el-Masīḥ Ḥaddād came back to him, so he saw death on his face and listened to it in his voice. Once he was leaving, Gibran gave him “a couple of dollars” asking him to buy “a bouquet of flowers” to offer as a salutation from him to the mother of his kids. It was as if he was saying his goodbyes to them and they were oblivious to that, and “fate was picking up threads of his earthly life” and they thought it was bygone with its weave.”⁴

On Thursday April 9, Barbara came looking for him and found him suffering from pain he had never experienced before. She called in the Doctor who didn’t see anything wrong with spending

¹ Nu‘aymah, *Mīkhā‘īl*, Previous Reference, p 203. Gibran had a habit after moving to New York which consisted of spending Christmas and New Year in addition to summer days with his sister Miryānā in Boston. Therefore, we see him sending letters from that city to Naimy who lives in New York. (Same Reference, p. 199.).

² Same Reference, p. 250.

³ Same Reference, p. 251.

⁴ Same Reference, pp. 255, 260-261.

his night at the house. So she spent that night at his place. The next Friday morning, his pain intensified so he was transferred to “Saint Vincent” hospital between 10 and 11 o’clock, and a while during the afternoon he entered into a coma. At five and half in the afternoon, Barbara notified Naimy at his work, so he came to the hospital and met with her at the door of Gibran’s¹ room. Once he entered the room, he found Gibran suffering from the last throes of death: “The gurgling subsiding in his chest and the groans got lost and broke and diverged. The doctor’s assistant tested Gibran’s pulse from time to time, waiting for the last beat.” A short while later, Miryānā showed up mourning, having come from Boston as soon as she got the telegram asking her to come to New York. She did not know, until then, that her brother was at risk of death, and that his final moments are countable. And here are Gibran’s groans fading away, and the last of his breaths slipping away at around 11:00 night of Friday the 10th of April 1931.²

Al-Rahhānī was notified of Gibran’s transfer to the hospital the night of his death. So he rushed to the hospital accompanied by his friends to check on him. They arrived at midnight and immediately went to his room, to find a nurse coming out and notifying him that he “passed away”.³

Gibran’s funeral:

A majestic funeral was held for Gibran. After Miryānā and everyone who was with her left the hospital to a nearby hotel, they went the next day, on Saturday, to Gibran’s place, and Nu’aymah and others met with them there and they started taking care of the necessary arrangements for

¹ Nu’aymah, Mikhā’īl, Previous Reference, pp. 13, 16. From the series of inquiries that Nu’aymah posed on Barbara, once he arrived, is whether someone had offered him to confess and commune, so she replied that he denied being a catholic in front of the nun who asked him about it, so she left him alone. She also added that a Syrian priest came to him after the nun, when he was still in comatose, and called him in a loud voice several times, and when he didn’t answer back, he left him (same reference, p. 16).

In another story, other than Nu’aymah’s, it is said that the priest Mansūr Istfān, from the town of Ghostā “who used to teach Arabic and translation in the school of The Jesuit Fathers in Cairo, and who used to write in “The Crescent” and sign his writing under the name “Mūnṣfān”; he traveled to Brooklyn in the United States after his ordination as a priest, and he knew Gibran and gave him the final divine secret and witnessed his death (Abī Dāhir, Joseph, *Fū’ūd Ḥūbaych wa zaman Al-Makshūf*, Publications of Notre Dame University, Zūq Mūshīh, First Edition , 2016, p. 22, footnote number 2).

² Same Reference, pp. 262, 264, the medical examination proved after the death congealment in the liver, with the start of tuberculosis in one of the lungs (Same Reference, p. 17).

³ Ar-Rihani, Amīn, *Bridging East and West*, Ar-Rihani For Printing And Distributing, Beirut, First Edition, 1957, p.132.

after death. It was decided to display the corpse in New York all Sunday, before moving it to Boston so that the people giving their farewells can take a last look at him the corpse was moved on Sunday morning from the hospital and was covered in a special hall, where thousands of people were streaming in to say their final goodbyes. On Monday morning, the corpse was transferred by train to Boston, accompanied by Miryānā and two of her cousins and Nu‘aymah, in addition to several members of the Pen League and two American women, one of them Barbara Young. He was laid down in the hall of “the Association of Aid of Syrian Women” until the morning of Tuesday, and from there to our Lady of Cedars Maronite church. After praying for him in church, he was carried in a crowded parade to the shrine of “Mount Benedict” in one of the city’s suburbs.¹ After the majestic funeral that was held for Gibran, the honorary memorial celebrations succeeded in several cities of the States, including a ceremony to which a group of his American friends came to host. The ceremony was held in the hall of Zurich museum in New York on the 29th of April 1931, in which Naimy participated and recited a poem in English, the republished a translation for it in his book about Gibran. He added to that the fortieth memorial that the Syrian community held in Brooklyn, which was sponsored by the Pen League and Nu‘aymah was its corporal.² As for Beirut, similar honorary celebrations were made, we mention one of them which is the one that was held for the fortieth memorial of his death, and Rihani was one of the highlight speakers in it.³

Several months after, his sister saw to moving the remains of Gibran to Lebanon, enforcing her brother’s will. The remains reached Beirut on 21 August 1931, and a crowded reception took place. The next day, it set out in a majestic parade to Bcharrī, to Mār Sarkīs to the location of the retreat that he always desired to live in its serenity, and his family was lucky to buy that monastery.⁴

¹ Same Reference, pp. 271, 273; Jabr, Jamīl, Previous Reference, p. 180. Concerning Gibran’s will that was submitted to the court and is dated march 30, 1930, and that he had left with his business man “Edgar Speyer”, and to which a copy was found with his sister Miryānā in Boston, and the people mentioned in that will, and the overall value of what he had left in cash, consult Nu‘aymah, pp. 276-277.

² Nu‘aymah, Mikhā‘īl, Previous Reference, pp. 316-320.

³ He reviews the speech of Ar-Rihani in his book: Bridges of the East and West, previous reference, pp. 132-134.

⁴ Same Reference, p. 275. Also review what Naimy had written in that matter (pp. 207-212), when he was “sitting in a chair on the shooting bench” and Gibran was busy shooting pictures of him and talking to him about what he wanted.

Appendix One

Women in Gibran's life

This appendix contains a fragment about several of the women who had a special relationship with Gibran; even though there is a difference in the effect that each had left in his personality and production, and the durability, firmness and continuation of the relationship. We mention their names in the following according to the timeline of their appearance in his life, noting that some of them were mentioned briefly in previous pages of this biography.

1. Josephine Peabody

She is an American poet and activist in the two fields of culture and arts in Boston. She met Gibran in that city when he was 15 years old and she was 24, and she became later on one of his inspirations. It appears that she is the one who invited her friend Mary Haskell to visit the exhibition that Gibran held in the studio "Fred Holland Day". She liked Gibran and did everything she could do to help him unfold his talents which she realized early.¹

2. Ḥalā ad-Dāhir

She is the daughter of the Sheikh Ṭannūs Ad-Dāhir, and the first Lebanese girl that Gibran loved. She was two years older than him, and she was sympathetic with him when her uncle, Sheikh 'Azīz, asked him to look after a goat instead of seeking to go to the Sagesse High School. Her brother, Sheikh Iskandar, forbid her from seeing him, and Gibran was notified of what Sheikh Ṭannūs always repeated: "a shoe with a jewel does not become a crown." She died single.²

¹ Al-Ḥilū Al-Laḥḥām, Aghāt Mas'ad, Previous Reference, p. 90.

² Al-Ḥilū Al-Laḥḥām, Aghāt Mas'ad, Same Reference, p. 92. We point here that the researcher mentions Ḥannā Ad-Dāhir as the Father; Brax, Ghāzī, Previous Reference, pp.69, 143.

3. Sūlṭānah Tābit

He met her in Beirut at the time of his study in the Sagesse High School, for she accompanied his relative in a visit to him. She was a widow of 22 years of age and he was 17. Their relationship lasted four months during which they exchanged books and comments. He found in her books and comments brevity and frigidity. She passes away four months after meeting him. After her death, he received from one of her acquaintances a silk scarf and some jewelry in addition to 17 sealed letters she had written before but never had the courage to confess her love to him. Gibran revealed her secret to Mary Haskell on the 4th of May 1908. When Michelin found out his secret, she asked him the next day to illustrate her, so he did. Michelin commented on the drawing saying that it made her know why Gibran illustrated the eyes so clearly in his drawings. He added that he still remembers the bend of her long neck.¹

4. Michelin

She is “Miss Emily Michelle” of French origins, and a teacher in the school of Mary Haskell and her friends. They met when Gibran visited that school during the first exhibition of his drawings there, and she was 20 years old. They loved each other, even though two years later their love turned into a troubled relationship. She married the American lawyer “Lamar Hardy” on the 4th of October 1914 and had kids with him. She remained after her marriage on good terms with Gibran. She passed away in 1931, several months after Gibran’s death.²

5. Mary Elizabeth Haskell

She is the most famous in Gibran’s life. It is rare for someone to his in his/her life what Gibran had in his friendship with this woman. They met on the 10th of May 1904 and their friendship lasted between them until he passed away, and she kept her loyalty to him until she passed away. She was born on the 11th of December 1873 in the city of Colombia in South Carolina. Her father is Alexander Cheves Haskell, an officer in the US army, with several honorary medals, and then a college professor. She has five sisters after four brothers. “She got her education in the “Wellesley” college, and practiced school press. She had an athletic body, tall figure (176 cm),

¹ Brax, Ghāzī, Previous Reference, pp. 144, 146.

² Same Reference, pp. 146-147; Al-Ḥilū Al-Laḥḥām, Aghāt Mas’ad, Previous Reference, p. 96; Nu’aymah, Mikhā’il, Previous Reference, pp. 79, 83-85; Jabr, Jamīl, pp. 48-49.

full of activity, practical thinker, influencing science on literature, and finds it the duty of women to share with men the service of the nation.”

Starting in 1910, she felt responsible for following the smallest details of Gibran’s life, so she started recording in her diaries a description of all what is related to his life, work, struggles, hopes and aspirations. In the private papers of Mains, which is kept in “Southern Historical Library” in the library of the college of North Caroline, Chapel Hill, there are 27 notebooks she used to describe their encounters extensively. In these notebooks there are paragraphs containing his opinion on literature, arts, philosophy, and religion, in addition to descriptions of everything related to him: how he moves, smiles and jokes, how he holds his cane and eats. In addition to his politeness, habits, hours of work, changes in his health, his clothes, food with their quantities and qualities, his talk, voice and tone. Add to this the way he sits when he leaves for writing, his lack of sleep and inability to rest and relax. This collection also contains letters sent between them, and they amount to 325 letters from him to her, and 290 letters vice versa, all dating between 1908 and 1931.

She nursed Gibran and surrounded him with her sympathy and supported him financially and morally. He did not keep anything from her, and he rarely kept a secret of his from her. He told her all about his work and consulted her with what he was determined to do. Her opinions and advice were heard. His consultations varied from regular material things to big financial matters. She gave him her financial support and sent him to Paris at her expense. She revised everything he published in English from articles and books before their release.

Gibran was the same with her; he was a good friend and advisor. He set designs for her school’s slogans and awards, and consoled her when she was in need or in distress from her work. They always shared ideas and conferred about lessons she was giving about “the same world.”¹

¹ We get most of this information from the two following references: love letters between Mary Haskell and Gibran with the diaries of Mary Haskell, translation and auditing of Lauren Fares, Al-Ahlīyyah For Production, Printing And Distribution. Number of pages 380, Second Edition, 1/4/2004; and the website “maaberna”: www.maaber.or>issue-july04 : The life of Gibran Khalil Gibran and Mary Haskell.

In 1923 she started her new life so she moved to live in Savannah as the companion of “Jacob Florence Mains”, the rich American businessman, and with “Louis Gilmore Mains”, the husband of her deceased cousin. On the 7th of May 1926, she married him and resided in the state of Georgia. She consulted Gibran about her marriage and he agreed, and asked her how she wanted him to address her after her marriage in the outset of his letters: “My Beloved Mary” or “My Dear Mary”. She met Gibran for the last time, after her marriage on the 13th of the same month in the same year. On 6 April 1931, 4 days before his death, Gibran received from her the last of her letters to him concerning the thoroughness in his book “The Wanderer”, and she addresses him in it: “My love, my love, my blessing.” Gibran passed away while “The Wanderer” was still in her hands being revised.¹

Her husband passed away in 1936. She lived 30 years afterwards, and then passed away in 1966 at the age of ninety-one.

6. Charlotte Taylor

She is the daughter of the senator Taylor, the member of the American congress and Mary’s best friend and close to her in age. Her divorce was still recent when she met Gibran. She has a dynamic personality, is an easy talker, superbly dynamic, play writer, journalist, and literary critic. Gibran introduced her to Amin Rihani and they had a very close relationship afterwards. She liked Amin and loved him, as well as liked his literature very much and wrote a comparison between his and Gibran’s literature, favoring the first from several sides. She also wrote to Mary expressing her admiration. A dispute occurred between her and Amin and soon escalated and led to the break of their relationship and to the coldness of the relationship between him and Gibran, a while after the publishing of “The Khaled”. She got married in November 1912 to a man names Hirsch. She stuck out at her time as a defender of women’s right in the elections. She saw Gibran’s opinion on incarnation, and declared that he spirit lived in ancient Egypt, then incarnated in many bodies including Hungarian and French before finally settling in her current body.²

¹ Brax, Ghāzī, Previous Reference, pp. 151, 153; Al-Ḥilū Al-Laḥḥām, Aghāt Mas’ad, Previous Reference, pp. 95, 113.

² Ar-Rihani, Amīn Albert, Previous Reference, pp. 204-207; Brax, Ghāzī, Previous Reference, p. 70; Al-Ḥilū Al-Laḥḥām, Aghāt Mas’ad, Previous Reference, p. 69.

7. Marī Khūrī

She was married and it probable that he fell in love with her during the first years of his stay in New York. Maybe she is the woman meant in his letters to Haskell in 1914, where he mentions that a woman seduced him and was deeply infatuated with his love¹. It is said that he wrote her more than 200 letters.

8. Māy Ziyādah (1886-1941)

She is the only daughter on a Lebanese father and an Orthodox Palestinian mother. She got her primary lesson in Nazareth, and went to high school in ‘Aynṭūrah. She moved with her family to live in Cairo where she studied in the college of literature and mastered French, English, German, Spanish, and Italian. She was famous in Egypt and other Arab countries and has a copious literal output. She founded in Egypt a literal committee that was very famous, and she held a meeting for it her house every Tuesday of every week, and great Arab media attended it. Gibran sent her a copy of “Broken Wings” together with a word of dedication after she sent him her first letter. Out of his last two letters to her, one was dated 1930, and the other not dated. Her father passed away in 1929, and her mother in 1932. In the last period of her life, she was tricked which caused her heartbreaking tragedy, so she was moved from Egypt to Lebanon and placed in a hospital for psychiatric and mental diseases and then she was transferred to one of the hospitals of the Lebanese capital. She got over this tragedy after intensive interventions and great pressure from the biggest men in literature in Lebanon and she returned to Egypt. She didn’t live long after this ordeal, so she passed away in 1941.²

9. Barbara Yung

She is an American poet, and writer and Gibran’s friend during the last 7 years of his life. She met him when she was 45 years old, and “The Prophet” paved the way for that meeting. She was charmed by the chapters of the book and began issuing the introductions of her poems which she published in newspapers with his quotes, and went ahead to explain his sayings and teaching

^{1 1} Brax, Ghāzī, Previous Reference, p.154.

^{2 2} Same Reference.

with great enthusiasm. She shared with Gibran her beliefs in reincarnation, and she thought that she lived in Africa before and was born again in the United States, and her poem “I was a black girl” revolves around this subject. Even though she did not have Josephine’s beauty, Michelin’s charm, nor Mary’s smartness and financial capability, she was trust worthy and impressive for her loyalty and fidelity. Fū’ād Afrām Al-Būstānī, quoted by Brax, says “She became one of Gibran’s most loyal friends and most honest assistants for 7 consecutive years, and he told her all that he had in his heart, sharing the secrets of his gloomy like especially at the end of it, so she sympathized with him like a mother would...” Khristo Najm was quoted saying that she was the secretary not the beloved woman nor the helping friend or the only inspiration. She silently loved Gibran, and this silent love manifests in many hints and signs that are present in her book “This Man from Lebanon”¹.

Barbara visited Lebanon in the spring of 1939 and embarked on a trip to the Sagesse High School where Gibran Khalīl Gibran went, wishing to teach her son in the institute where the author of “The Prophet” studied. She returned to America waiting for the political situation to be cleared after the occupation of the “Dantzig” passage (Polish port on the Baltic Sea²). It looks like the outbreak of World War II came between her and fulfilling her wish.

10. Hilānah Ghūṣṭīn

This woman was discovered in the life of Gibran by the Jordanian author ‘Ibrāhīm Nāṣir Sūwaydān, and he dedicated for her a chapter in his book published in Los Angeles under the title “Gibran Like I Know Him” for the occasion of the 70th memorial of Gibran.

Her father is Sheikh Giryis Ghosṭīn B‘aqlīnī from the town of Bzībdīn, one of the towns of the South Matn, and her mother is Taqlā Mūkarzil, sister of Na‘ūm Mūkarzil, the owner of “Al-Hūdah” diasporas newspaper. She studied in Beirut and immigrated to New York in 1917 and continued her education in one of its universities. She knew in addition to her mother tongue language French and English. She did several tasks including: director in one of the hospitals for

¹ Same reference, pp. 156, 158; Al-Hīlū Al-Laḥḥām, Aghāt Mas‘ad, Previous Reference, pp. 113-114.

² This news was told by the Priest Leo Maqṣūd (Director of the Arab studies in the Sagesse High School in Beirut at that time) to the author Fū’ād Hūbaysh, the owner of The Al-Makshūf publishing house. Review Abi Dāhir, Joseph, Fū’ād Hūbaysh Wa Zaman Al-Makshūf, Publications of Notre Dame University, Zūk Mūsbiḥ, first Edition, 2016, p. 22, footnote number 2.

blinds, editor in “Al-Hūdah” where she attended meetings of “The League of Nations” which was founded by Felix Fares, and she was also a teacher in a private school in New York. After her retirement, she settled in Los Angeles where she met the author of the book in 1964, in the office of “Al-Hūdah”. She told Sūwaydān how she met Gibran and about their friendship that lasted 6 years.

Her first encounter with Gibran happened in the office of “Al-Hūdah” in New York, at the end of a meeting he was invited to discuss with a group of intellectuals the famine in Lebanon during World War I and discuss how to raise donations and distribute them to the people in need. At the end of the meeting, he invited her to visit him in his atelier, so she said she would go if Felix Fāris went. Indeed, she visited him in the “silo” with Fares and Nu‘aymah was present. She made them the Arabic coffee that Gibran loves, and poured it in his red, wooden, Chinese cups¹.

During this meeting Hilānah liked Gibran and so did he. After their encounter she started visiting him in his atelier, and they went together to private important meetings. They exchanged emotional letters, and she tried luring him into marriage but did not succeed. He gave her at the beginning of their get together a picture of him appended with his poems, in addition to copies of his three books: “Rebellious Spirits”, “Broken Wings”, and “A Tear and a Smile”, with a special dedication on each copy.

Hilānah Sūwaydān gave, before her death in 1967, five original letters in Gibran’s handwriting, in addition to the red, wooden Chinese cups that Gibran used².

¹ Kfarbū Educational Magazine, an electronic magazine that is published monthly from regional to global, main page, issue number 22, October 2013.

² Same Reference, same page. Many references handling this side of Gibran indicate other women including Mary Qahwajī, Marita Lucy or Mrs. Mason, who was his style for a while, and Corinne Roosevelt, the sister of Theodor Roosevelt (1858-1919), who became president of the United States between 1901-1909, and others, but we settled for those who we showed a briefing of for our belief that they are the ones with the most effect on his life.

Second Appendix

Gibran's writings

This appendix includes a bibliography of Gibran's writings in Arabic and English, along with the publication date of each, noting that these writings were already mentioned in the course of presenting the stages of Gibran's biography.

Arabic writings:

Music 1905
Nymphs of the Valley 1906
Rebellious Spirits 1908
Broken Wings 1912
A Tear and a Smile 1914
The Processions 1919
The Tempests 1920
Aram of the Pillars 1921
The New and the Marvelous 1923

English Writings:

The Madman 1918
The Forerunner 1920
The Prophet 1923
Sand and Foam 1926
Jesus, the Son of Man 1928
The Earth Gods 1931
The Wanderer (posthumous) 1932
The Garden of the Prophet (after his death) 1933